

Subject: CTB Testimony on the FY 2016 – FY 2021 Six-Year Improvement Program

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Location: 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax

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Good evening Secretary Layne, Commissioner Kilpatrick, Director Mitchell, and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). My name is Nathan Macek and I am the chair of the Alexandria Transportation Commission. I am here this evening to provide testimony on the draft FY 2016 to FY 2021 Six-Year Improvement Program on behalf of the City of Alexandria (the City).

As you know, the City of Alexandria is working towards a transportation system that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduces dependence on the private automobile. We have been building this multi-modal network with the Commonwealth's support, and it is resulting in the establishment of transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly activity centers, forming a more urban, vibrant and sustainable Alexandria. Continued leadership and funding from the Commonwealth is essential to the realization of this vision. Let me begin by commenting on several bills that were enacted in recent years that, when fully implemented, will provide opportunities to improve the Commonwealth's transportation systems.

- HB 2313 funding has provided and continues to provide a real opportunity to address the backlog of transportation projects that are critical to our region's connectivity and economy. The success of HB 2313 relies on continued coordination at all levels of government, particularly as the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) implements HB 599 and evaluates and prioritizes regional transportation projects. We urge the CTB and VDOT to work closely with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to continue to refine a methodology for rating projects pursuant to this legislation.
- HB 1887 funding also provides additional financial assistance for transit capital projects that are critical to our region's connectivity and economy.
- With the passage of HB 2 in the 2014 Session, the CTB will utilize a process to better balance transportation needs and prioritize transportation investments throughout the Commonwealth.

We urge CTB and VDOT to continue to work closely with all localities as well as with the NVTB and the Transportation Planning Board as this process moves forward. We also appreciate the ongoing efforts of the DRPT and the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee to implement the statewide transit formula. We are pleased to see the development of pilot programs to address congestion mitigation and the needs of transit-dependent riders. In addition, we thank DRPT for working with the region to address concerns regarding how Metrorail ridership is counted, which is essential to the new funding formula for transit operating costs.

- The City again requests that \$1 million of the surplus Seminary HOV ramp funds be allocated to resolving a major fire suppression design flaw on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The current dry pipe system reduces response times, which increases risk to the bridge and its users until first responders arrive. Given the dollar amount of the Six-Year Program, this is a small amount in comparison to the multi-billion dollar value of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- The City would like to thank the Administration for including Alexandria as a stakeholder in the VTrans process. We look forward to more coordination and the ability to provide input throughout this process as it will be important to coordinate statewide, regional, and local plans as part of this process. A concern we do have in regards to VTrans is that the Vision Statement discusses improving the movement of goods and supporting strategic placemaking; however, it does not address the need to move people.
- In regards to the Draft SYIP, the City wants to express concerns regarding the substantial decrease in funding for the Revenue Sharing program over the next six years. This program significantly leverages state transportation funds by encouraging local governments to spend their own money on transportation projects. The program has been a success in Northern Virginia and has allowed more projects throughout the region and the Commonwealth to move forward. Reducing this funding will only slow the efforts to improve our transportation system.
- As WMATA and the jurisdictions continue to discuss the long-term implementation and funding of Momentum, we ask the CTB to consider significant additional long-term funding for this plan as a possible economic investment in the region's future as well as the impact this has on the state's tax receipts.
- WMATA's standard capital program, which generally supports only the replacement of existing equipment that wears out, is funded by federal formula funds, and various state and local funds;

this program provides for about 66% of WMATA's total capital needs. In response to the general state of disrepair of the WMATA system due to lack of funds, federal legislation was enacted several years ago to allow the systematic rehabilitation of the entire WMATA system, including its rail cars. This legislation authorized \$150 million annually in federal funding for 10 years (the authorization lasts through FY 2020), to be matched by \$50 million annually from each of the three WMATA partners (VA, MD, and DC). Again, we ask for the Administration and CTB's continued support for WMATA by allocating the \$50 State match required for the federal funding to continue, and by providing other sustainable funding for WMATA.

- The City of Alexandria is going through the final phases of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement process for the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail station. By summer, the City hopes to have a build alternative selected. The station will represent the largest transit investment the City has ever made. We appreciate the State's partnership in extending the City a \$50 million loan through the Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (VTIB). In addition to local funding already identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program, we plan to seek funding from the Commonwealth for the planned station in future Six Year Improvement Programs.
- The City has made significant enhancements to its bicycle and pedestrian network over the last several years, offering residents and commuters additional transportation options. Federal and State funding have been critical to the success of these projects. We are encouraged that that Transportation Alternatives funding continues to be prioritized for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and that a portion of these funds are available to large urban areas. The Transportation Alternatives Fund is a relatively small source of money that supports programs that move many people at a low cost per trip.
- The City would like to thank the Commonwealth Transportation Board for its support in providing vehicular access to the Mark Center BRAC-133 Washington Headquarters Service site, including the programming of significant monies for a new variable direction transit ramp from the HOV lanes at I-395 to Seminary Road and the construction of short- and mid-term improvements at the site.
- The City requests that the Commonwealth fully fund construction of the I-395 South Widening Project, Duke Street to Edsall Road, to improve mobility and relieve congestion at the bottleneck through the Landmark area.

- As always, we thank the staff members from VDOT and DRPT who have provided assistance in flexing funds to transit projects and in helping to obtain necessary planning inputs for several projects.

We request that this testimony be made part of the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program public hearing record, and that full consideration be given to these comments in preparing the final FY 2016 – FY 2021 SYIP. Please let me know if I can provide any clarifications regarding the City’s testimony.